

BC ASSOCIATION

of **CLINICAL  
COUNSELLORS**



# STANDARDS OF CLINICAL PRACTICE Professional Integrity and Communication

Effective November 1, 2023

# OVERVIEW: STANDARDS OF CLINICAL PRACTICE

## **STANDARD 1: CLIENT-CENTERED PRACTICE AND CONSENT**

The Clinical Counsellor ensures that every aspect of care is centered around the client's immediate and ongoing needs and goals.

## **STANDARD 2: COMPETENCE AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT**

The Clinical Counsellor develops and maintains their competence, applies clinically indicated and/or evidence-informed methods, critical thinking and clinical and professional judgment, and engages in quality improvement to best serve clients and protect the public.

## **STANDARD 3: PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY AND COMMUNICATION**

The Clinical Counsellor meets the ethical and legal requirements of professional practice and demonstrates responsible caring, honesty, integrity and respect for all persons and peoples. The Clinical Counsellor is truthful, accurate, and clear in all communications, respecting and supporting a client's, or potential client's, ability to make informed judgements and choices, and addresses misrepresentations appropriately.

## **STANDARD 4: DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND ANTI-RACISM**

The Clinical Counsellor demonstrates cultural humility, which begins with a self-examination of values, assumptions, beliefs, and privileges embedded in their own knowledge and practice, and consideration of how this may impact therapeutic relationships with all clients. In collaboration with the client, the Clinical Counsellor facilitates safer health care experiences where clients' physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, social, and cultural needs can be met.

## **STANDARD 5: INDIGENOUS CULTURAL SAFETY, CULTURAL HUMILITY, AND ANTI-RACISM**

The Clinical Counsellor strives to be well-versed in the unique issues caused by structural and systemic racism and the impact on Indigenous clients. The Clinical Counsellor works to ensure they address systemic issues within the practice environment while creating a culturally informed, collaborative, and safer clinical experience for clients. Clinical Counsellors ensure they practice with cultural humility and awareness of systemic racism ensuring Indigenous clients get access to relevant, culturally informed, anti-racist care.

## **STANDARD 6: CLINICAL AND COUNSELLING ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING**

The Clinical Counsellor, within their individual range of competencies, training, and experience, conducts clinical or counselling assessments and prepares clear, concise, accurate, and timely reports appropriate to the needs of the client and the recipient.

## **STANDARD 7: VIRTUAL PRACTICE AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES**

The Clinical Counsellor integrates technology and provides services via remote (virtual) means in a manner that does not compromise quality or integrity of professional service and is in the client's best interests.

## **STANDARD 8: RELATIONSHIPS, BOUNDARIES AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The Clinical Counsellor manages relationships intentionally, maintains appropriate professional boundaries, and recognizes, prevents, and takes action to resolve conflicts of interest—direct, potential, or perceived.

### **STANDARD 9: SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**

The Clinical Counsellor refrains from all activities that would create the potential for sexual misconduct, including activities that exploit the power imbalance and/or trust required of the therapeutic relationship.

### **STANDARD 10: PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

The Clinical Counsellor respects clients' rights to the privacy and confidentiality of their personal information. All clinical content communicated through the course of care by both parties, including information contained in the clinical record is considered to be protected client information. Clinical Counsellors protect all communicated and stored client information and comply with relevant legislation, ethical guidelines and regulatory standards related to privacy and confidentiality at all times.

### **STANDARD 11: MARKETING, ADVERTISING AND FEES FOR SERVICE**

The Clinical Counsellor is truthful, accurate, and clear in all communications, and considers approaches to advertising and marketing activities that are in the best interests of clients and potential clients, and that respect and support the ability to make informed judgements and choices.

### **STANDARD 12: DOCUMENTATION AND RECORD KEEPING**

The Clinical Counsellor maintains and secures client and financial records with the highest integrity, adhering to BCACC bylaws and applicable legislative and regulatory requirements.

### **STANDARD 13: ETHICAL CONDUCT**

The Clinical Counsellor adheres to the ethical principles contained within the BCACC Code of Ethical Conduct and demonstrates ethical behaviour in all professional activities, recognizing the variable nature of ethical concerns and engaging in self-reflective, respectful, and caring practices to protect the inherent worth and wellbeing of all their clients.



# STANDARD 3: PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY AND COMMUNICATION

The Clinical Counsellor meets the ethical and legal requirements of professional practice and demonstrates responsible caring, honesty, integrity, and respect for all persons and peoples. The Clinical Counsellor is truthful, accurate, and clear in all communications, respecting and supporting a client's, or potential client's, ability to make informed judgements and choices, and addresses misrepresentations appropriately.

## Expected Outcome:

The client can expect their Clinical Counsellor to exhibit the highest level of professional integrity and provide respectful treatment and services in compliance with ethical and legal requirements.

## Criteria

The Clinical Counsellor:

### Professional Integrity

- 3.1 Acts in accordance with applicable laws, Bylaws, Standards, and the BCACC Code of Ethical Conduct in all undertakings and recognizes the variable and contextual application of each, seeking clarity from the BCACC, professional colleagues, clinical supervisors, or appropriate legal counsel, when required.
- 3.2 Maintains current working knowledge of applicable laws, Bylaws, Standards, and the BCACC Code of Ethical Conduct.
- 3.3 Applies professional Standards to all counselling services delivered to the client and any research or educational activities undertaken.
- 3.4 Makes all applicable credentials and certificate(s) of membership/registration available to others, upon request.
- 3.5 Maintains currency with respect to requirements for continued eligibility for BCACC membership.
- 3.6 Represents self clearly and accurately at all times, in all formats and forums, without exaggeration or references to degrees or memberships not in good standing. Maintains a representation of education, training and affiliation that is accurate and not misleading to the client's perception of credentialing as it pertains to the Clinical Counsellor's role.
- 3.7 Refrains from making public statements that are false, misleading, deceptive, or fraudulent, whether directly or by what is omitted, about matters respecting health, relating to health, the profession and/or member competency, experience, registration, credentials, or services.
- 3.8 Takes steps to correct any misrepresentations of membership, registration, credentials, experience, or competence of the member or the profession.
- 3.9 Reads all communications received from the BCACC, including those regarding BCACC investigations, and responds and cooperates as required within reasonable and/or prescribed timelines.
- 3.10 Identifies any actual or potential conflicts that arise between legal requirements, Bylaws, Standards, and the BCACC Code of Ethical Conduct and takes steps to find resolution in a reasonable manner.

- 3.11 Reports any incident of unauthorized practice to the BCACC.
- 3.12 Reports any incident of unauthorized use of the Registered Clinical Counsellor (RCC) title to the BCACC.
- 3.13 Maintains ongoing and current awareness and understanding of the legislative and regulatory requirements regarding the professional practice of health care professionals.

#### Communication

- 3.14 Commits to truthfulness and accuracy in all communications, except those circumstances where full disclosure compromises confidentiality of individuals, relationships, families or groups.
- 3.15 Refrains from derogatory comments about individuals, relationships, families, groups, or communities.
- 3.16 Promotes client understanding of the proposed services through engaged listening, use of clear and explicit language, and encouragement of questions that support thorough understanding.
- 3.17 Explains potential risks, benefits, advantages, and disadvantages of services, and/or research or educational participation being offered or delivered.
- 3.18 Uses respectful, transparent, and straightforward communication, that conveys respect for all persons and peoples, in all professional interactions (verbal, written, and online) including with clients, colleagues, students, supervisees, research participants, and others.
- 3.19 Identifies potential barriers to communication and makes a reasonable effort to address those barriers using appropriate tools and techniques (e.g., certified interpreters, technology, visual educational materials).

#### Related BCACC Documents

- Code of Ethical Conduct
- Integrated Bylaws
- Entry to Practice Competency Profile

#### Related Standards of Clinical Practice

- Standard 1: Client-Centered Practice and Consent
- Standard 2: Competence and Quality Improvement
- Standard 4: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism
- Standard 5: Indigenous Cultural Safety, Cultural Humility, and Anti-Racism
- Standard 6: Clinical and Counselling Assessment and Reporting
- Standard 8: Relationships, Boundaries, and Conflict of Interest
- Standard 9: Sexual Misconduct
- Standard 11: Marketing, Advertising, and Fees for Service

#### Glossary Definitions

**Derogatory:** Tending or intending to belittle; devaluing the inherent worth of a person, group, or community.

**Health care professional:** Member of a regulated health profession or occupation.

**Reasonable:** That which any other Registered Clinical Counsellor with similar education, experience and/or training would do in a similar situation.

**Supervisee:** Any person who performs a counselling service under the supervision of a registrant.



**Unauthorized Practice:** refers to the provision of services covered by the *Health Professions (and Occupations) Act* by a person not licensed or authorized by a regulatory body to do so.

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